

HIGHER EDUCATION UPDATE

NUMBER UP/98-1
FEBRUARY 1998



News from the

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Toward a Greater Understanding of the State's Educational Equity Policies, Programs, and Practices: The Collegiate Experience

THIS series of seven Higher Education Updates (with accompanying Fact Sheets) explores California's policies, programs, and practices designed to provide all our students with an equal opportunity to pursue their educational goals -- goals that benefit both the individual and our state. The Commission's intention in publishing this series is to enhance understanding among all Californians and our policy makers about the importance of educational equity to our State's future. Beginning in April 1997, the Commission will publish a Higher Education Update approximately every two months through April, 1998. At that time, the series will conclude with the publication of an Update that presents a set of options for the State to consider for furthering our goal of educational opportunity for all Californians.

THROUGHOUT this series, the Commission has stated repeatedly that one goal of our educational system is to prepare students to participate productively in the world that they will enter upon graduation -- a world that will be increasingly international, interdependent, and multicultural. This installment of the series explores the nature of our students' college experiences and the extent to which our institutions are environments that are preparing them for the California of the future. As Gerhard Casper, President of Stanford University, said with respect to the importance of diversity at our colleges and universities:

We do not admit minorities to do them a favor. We want students from a variety of backgrounds to help fulfill our educational responsibilities . . . to educate leaders for a diverse and complex society.

Three major influences affecting the experiences of our students in a collegiate setting provide the organization for this Higher Education Update. They are:

1. Faculty,
2. Staff, and,
3. Students.

THE INFLUENCE OF FACULTY

How do the faculty influence the collegiate experiences of students?

The primary educational activities on our college and university campuses occur in classrooms, in various research settings, and through public service opportunities. Faculty play multiple roles in these activities:

- ◆ The faculty select the curriculum and, therefore, the knowledge to which students are exposed. This responsibility for curriculum development places the faculty in a key position to determine for students the relative importance of ideas, people, and cultures.
- ◆ Faculty teach the curriculum. Teaching is the act of transmitting knowledge judged to be significant and the critical skills needed to comprehend this knowledge base.

- ♦ The faculty choose the research topics that will constitute new knowledge. Particularly at doctoral-granting institutions, professors identify the relevant fields in which pure and applied research will be conducted and, because of the apprentice-like relationship between researcher and student, guide their apprentices into investigations that may launch academic careers.
- ♦ In large measure, faculty determine the nature of the public service that colleges and universities conduct. For this reason, faculty play a crucial part in engaging our students in the world that surrounds the campus.
- ♦ The faculty serve as the embodiment of the academic career. The extent to which professors are perceived positively may influence the decision of students to pursue careers in the academy.
- ♦ Faculty members are leaders on campus. They provide a picture of the respected individuals in the society. Furthermore, professors are the primary source of encouragement and support for students pursuing academic careers and other professional fields as well.

Faculty, then, both determine the skills, knowledge, and competencies that students learn and they identify and select the next generation of educators.

Given these roles, why is the composition of the faculty important in achieving the educational mission of the institution?

Faculty composition is important for several reasons:

1. If the faculty present multiple perspectives on areas of inquiry, teach subjects in a variety of ways, emphasize different points of views, place unique significance on particular pieces of knowledge, and identify myriad ways of viewing an event, students will have greater exposure to the diverse approaches that increasingly characterize the world that they will enter upon graduation. Moreover, presentation of differing perspectives provides the opportunity for students to become independent thinkers capable of examining issues from multiple viewpoints and forming their own opinions.
2. Faculty members set the parameters of scholarship and research, particularly at doctoral-granting universities. If those parameters are set based on individuals' broad and diverse range of experiences, students will have greater license to experiment in their scholarly activities and stretch their own creative minds.
3. In most colleges and universities, "public service," or community involvement, is an integral part of the institution's mission. When faculty have diverse interests in public service, students will have legitimate choices to explore in both becoming familiar with a multiplicity

of communities and utilizing their new knowledge and skills in various ways.

4. Because faculty form the core of our colleges and universities, they are leaders for students. When the faculty consists of individuals from various backgrounds, with different experiential bases, and with varying teaching and scholarly interests, students have opportunities to expand the universe of leaders with whom they identify and interact. Because most students live in homogeneous communities, attending a college or university may be among their first experiences with leaders whose backgrounds are different from their own. A diverse faculty illustrates that people from all backgrounds, and particularly their own, are leaders and that they, also, may earn positions of prominence and respect in this society.
5. Concomitant to the role of faculty as leaders, faculty are also role models and mentors for students. This aspect of faculty-student relations is especially crucial in replenishing the academy but it has wider implications in that graduates are introduced into myriad professions through the actions of faculty. Only by ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds have opportunities to participate in the formal and informal processes by which these introductions occur is it likely that the diversity of the country's professions will expand.

Are the only effective relationships between faculty and students when they have the same backgrounds and experiences?

No. The primary requisite for being a mentor or role model is to be a caring and concerned individual who is willing to assist a student to develop his or her potential to its fullest -- a quality demonstrated on campuses by faculty from all backgrounds and communities with students from equally diverse backgrounds. On the other hand, the presence of faculty from diverse backgrounds enhances the probability that students from similar communities will take full advantage of the educational opportunities available on campus.

What is the process for selecting faculty members?

Faculty are normally selected through a search process at the departmental level. When a position becomes available, an announcement is prepared and distributed throughout local, state, and national educational communities. Usually, applications are reviewed by the campus Personnel Office to determine if they meet minimum qualifications.

Candidates are only considered for a faculty position if they are qualified on the basis of academic degrees earned, number of years of teaching experience, or other criteria outlined in the position description. The specific strengths that a candidate brings to the position in terms of areas of spe-

cialization, research interests, quantity and quality of publications, and the extent to which the candidate would contribute uniquely to the department in terms of adding breadth or depth are considered as well.

All applications that meet those qualifications are forwarded to the relevant academic department which establishes a search committee to identify those candidates that it will interview. The interview committee is often composed of several members of the hiring department and, often, faculty from other appropriate departments.

The interview committee forwards a recommendation to the departmental chair. If there is concurrence with the recommendation, the chair forwards the recommendation through the appropriate administrative channels in order to tender an offer. Only in rare instances does the campus administration act in a manner contrary to the recommendation of a departmental interview committee.

How do colleges and universities seek to assemble a diverse faculty?

Because our colleges and universities consider diversity to be an educational strength, they often seek to expand the pool of qualified candidates applying for faculty positions. Moreover, since 1965 when President Johnson issued Executive Order 11246, institutions receiving federal contracts have been required to make “good faith” efforts to eliminate the effects of historical discrimination and assure that equal opportunities are available for prospective employees.

To accomplish this goal, our institutions use various strategies, including placing position announcements in publications read by prospective applicants from diverse backgrounds, establishing communications with institutions that award advanced degrees in significant numbers to students from various backgrounds, and developing recruitment programs that focus on graduates from these communities. These efforts are particularly important because faculty recruitment has traditionally relied upon informal networks among faculty members from various institutions who are in close contact. The extent to which candidates are part of these informal networks varies, often, on the basis of the universities from which they graduated, their gender, and their racial-ethnic background.

What is the composition of the faculty in California higher education?

Display 1 on the accompanying Fact Sheet presents information on the composition of faculty in California public higher education in 1995 -- the latest year for which information is available. Men comprised a majority of the faculty in all public higher education systems in the mid 1990s,

particularly at the University of California. Further, White faculty members constituted over three-fourths of the professoriate in each of these systems. In the two university systems, Asian faculty comprised the next largest group, while the second largest group in the community colleges consisted of Latino faculty members.

THE INFLUENCE OF STAFF

How do the staff influence the collegiate experiences of students?

A second major influence on the educational experiences of our students in higher education are the staff, including the institution’s executives and administrators. Like the faculty, these educators have critical roles that influence students:

- ◆ Through their actions and decisions about expenditure of resources, the executive staff exhibit the values and philosophy of the institution.
- ◆ Staff develop the system through which the institution is managed. This responsibility places them in key positions to influence the progress of their students.
- ◆ Staff teach students the institution’s operative procedures and assist them to understand and negotiate the institution.
- ◆ Staff develop and implement the programs and services that are responsive to the changing needs of students and that affect both students’ academic and personal development.
- ◆ Staff serve as the embodiment of careers in educational environments. If staff are perceived positively, students may decide to pursue careers in the academy.

Given these roles, why is the composition of the staff important in achieving the educational mission of the institution?

Staff composition is important for several reasons:

1. The executive and administrative leadership determines the values and perspectives that permeate the campus. Decisions about the allocation of institutional resources, particularly as related to activities that directly affect students, are critical in influencing the extent to which students will be able to achieve their educational objectives.
2. Staff play major roles in students’ educational experiences through the creation of programs that serve the academic needs of the student body, especially those that are designed to foster academic success of students. This complex of services includes tutoring, skill development courses, learning laboratories, academic advisement, and study skills classes. In addition to this academic

support, the concern and care demonstrated by the program staff often creates a permanent bond between the student and the institution.

3. With respect to non-academic activities, staff are responsible for developing activities designed to integrate students into the collegiate environment. Staff sponsor student organizations, arrange campus cultural activities, select artwork to be displayed throughout the institution, counsel students during personal and physical crises, and live with students on campuses with residential facilities. If the traditions and cultures of students from various communities are reflected throughout the campus, students are more likely to perceive the campus as hospitable.
4. Staff are institutional ambassadors as well as mentors and role models. They transmit the institution's values and perspectives and determine the extent to which students perceive that the institution is committed to their educational success. Moreover, students may make decisions about whether to pursue careers in higher education on the basis of their interactions with collegiate staff.

Are there effective relationships between staff and students only when they have the same background and experience?

No. However, because of the crucial role that staff play in influencing students' experiences in college or university settings, if staff are comprised of individuals from various backgrounds and with varying life experiences, all students will be exposed to a wider range of leaders than they are likely to have encountered in the past. This exposure may be experienced differently by students from various backgrounds but its significance is that students from various groups will have the opportunity to interface and communicate with a diverse set of leaders.

A second outcome likely to emerge when staff consist of individuals from various backgrounds and life experiences is that these differences will be reflected in their own actions and perspectives. That is, their communication styles, programmatic designs, cultural interests, and artistic tastes vary and that variation provides students with a multiplicity of choices on campus. Opportunities for students to have choices and make decisions is an integral part of the educational experience; the more diverse the staff, the greater the opportunity for making those choices.

What is the process for selecting staff members?

Staff are selected through a search process that often involves staff members from various campus units. As with faculty positions, job announcements are distributed locally,

statewide, and often nationally. Upon receipt of applications, the Personnel Office reviews them to determine if they meet minimum qualifications. Those applications meeting the minimum criteria are forwarded to the relevant department which often establishes a screening committee to identify those candidates to be interviewed.

Interviews are held with prospective candidates to determine their particular skills and experience for the position. The degree to which a candidate has occupied a similar position at a campus whose institutional characteristics are congruent with the hiring college or university is often regarded as a positive factor in the hiring process.

Once the screening committee has made its decision, a recommendation is forwarded to the supervisor or manager for the position. If concurrence exists between the supervisor and the committee, the recommendation is forwarded through administrative channels such that an offer may be made. More often than not, the campus administration will accept the supervisor or manager's recommendation.

How do colleges and universities seek to assemble a diverse staff?

As with faculty hiring, both because our institutions consider diversity among the staff to be a strength and because of federal requirements, efforts are made in the recruitment process to develop a diverse pool of candidates. Strategies in staff searches to accomplish this goal are similar to those used in faculty searches: announcements are placed in publications read by diverse audiences and special efforts are initiated to contact graduates from diverse communities.

What is the composition of the staff in California higher education?

Display 2 on the Fact Sheet provides information on the composition of the full-time staff in California public colleges and universities in 1995. The majority of staff members were women in the community colleges and the University. In terms of racial-ethnic background, White staff constituted over one-half of the full-time staff members in all the systems, while the remainder varied by system.

What is the composition of the executive leadership in California public higher education?

The leadership cadre of California public higher education sets the values and determines the perspectives of their systems. As such, the depth and breadth of these executives' knowledge and experience with the various communities that comprise this state will significantly influence the extent to which our colleges and universities prepare students from all backgrounds for the future California.

In each of the public higher education systems, men constituted approximately three-quarters of the executive leadership in 1995. In the community colleges and State University, 65 percent of the administrative leadership was composed of White executives; in the University, that proportion rose to 85 percent. In the State University and University, African-Americans constituted the second largest group of executive leaders, while Latino executives comprised the second largest group in the community colleges.

THE INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS

How do students influence the collegiate experiences of other students?

The student body of a college or university may, indeed, be the most influential factor on the educational experiences of their classmates. Among the ways in which students influence the experiences of their counterparts are:

- ♦ As classmates, students express their viewpoints and interact with other students on curricular and instructional matters. They share the intellectual experience of learning new ideas, gaining knowledge, and developing competencies in a formal classroom situation.
- ♦ Students learn together through participation in study groups, tutoring arrangements, learning laboratories, informal exchanges, and organized activities.
- ♦ Students join campus organizations and collaborate to accomplish common purposes.
- ♦ Often, students live together in campus dwellings or in residences adjacent to the college or university.
- ♦ Students become campus employees and provide services to other members of the student body.
- ♦ Students interact socially through which friendships, romances, and rivalries are formed.
- ♦ Students participate in intramural and institutionally-sponsored athletic teams.

In short, interactions among students on campuses are pervasive learning experiences that occur continuously.

Why is the composition of an institution's student body important in achieving its educational mission?

If one of the primary missions of a college or university is to prepare students to participate productively in the world that they will enter upon graduation, then the extent to which our colleges and universities reflect that world is critical in achieving their educational missions. Because that world will consist of individuals from various backgrounds and life experiences, with differing ideas and perspectives, college campuses are best positioned to prepare students if they

simulate that future world with respect to its expected diversity. Without diversity of people, ideas, and perspectives, it is unlikely that an institution's graduates will possess the knowledge, skills, and competencies to become adept and comfortable in California's tomorrow.

What is the composition of the student bodies in California higher education?

Display 3 indicates that there were more women than men enrolled in each of the three public systems of higher education in California in 1996, although by only a small margin in the University. Further, the public systems had student bodies in which no racial-ethnic group constituted a majority -- a reflection of the projected State population by the year 2000. White students were a plurality of the population in each of the public systems, with Asian and Latino students comprising the next largest groups. While the same situation holds true in California's independent institutions, the gap between the proportion of White students and others in the student body is somewhat larger than at the public institutions in that White students constitute a majority of undergraduates at these colleges and universities.

Given this composition, to what extent do students self-segregate on college campuses in California?

In recent years, concern has been expressed that, despite the increase in the diversity of California higher education, students tend to interact primarily with others from their same backgrounds and experiences. Often cited to support this conclusion is *The Diversity Project* -- an examination of student attitudes on the Berkeley campus in the late 1980s. The study found that, to some extent, "Balkanization," or the tendency of students from the same racial-ethnic background to associate exclusively with each other, exists. The study, likewise, found that considerable interaction exists across racial-ethnic lines, particularly among students who were nearing the completion of their undergraduate years.

The report concluded that students often go through an evolutionary process on a campus with a diverse student body. In their earlier years, students tend to associate with other students with whom they are most comfortable because of the similarity of their backgrounds and life experiences -- a situation observed historically with respect to associations on the basis of similar religious beliefs. This tendency provides an opportunity for students both to gain confidence and, in the case of students from communities in which college attendance is rare, to absorb as much as possible about their own culture and history. This tendency is especially evident with students who are the first in their families to attend college because of their need for a strong support system that will assist them in adapting to an unfamiliar and

often perceived inhospitable environment. As they progress through the institution and gain social and intellectual self-confidence, students tend to expand their horizons and seek interaction with others whose academic interests are similar, although their backgrounds may differ. Moreover, the researchers concluded that the classroom is an ideal setting to promote interaction among students from different backgrounds by creating intellectual exercises that encourage group dynamics.

To what extent does interaction among students from different backgrounds and experiences lead to conflict or controversy?

Because most students are from homogeneous communities and schools, a collegiate environment may be the first time in which students encounter people from various backgrounds and life experiences. Not surprisingly, a number of reactions may occur because of students' lack of familiarity with people from different communities:

- ♦ Students may arrive on campus with negative attitudes towards people from particular communities. Being cognizant of this possibility, some colleges and universities have developed programs and activities to create opportunities for students to gain knowledge and become familiar with classmates from backgrounds other than their own.
- ♦ Students may inadvertently say or act in a manner which is offensive to other students. When this occurs, colleges and universities can make these occasions into "teachable moments," where students can learn and grow as a result. In fact, valuable learning experiences can occur if institutions are adept at spontaneously using these inadvertences in an educationally responsible fashion.
- ♦ Students may engage in deliberate actions designed to offend a student or group of students. In these cases, institutions have formal and informal processes and procedures to address the incident that denote the boundaries of acceptable behavior in a collegiate setting.

In all these situations, our higher education institutions have a responsibility to both protect the rights of individuals and provide opportunities for participants to learn and gain knowledge from their actions and those of their classmates.

What is the current level of undergraduate degree completion in California higher education?

The attainment of an undergraduate degree is a significant cumulative measure of the extent to which a student's educational experiences have been productive. Display 4 on the Fact Sheet presents information on the composition of the 1995-96 graduating classes from the baccalaureate-granting institutions in California.

In keeping with the composition of the student population in Display 3, women comprised the majority of Bachelor's Degrees recipients. Further, the majority of Bachelor's Degrees awarded in the State University and at the independent colleges and universities are earned by White students; at the University, a plurality of undergraduate degrees are earned by White students. In all three sectors, Asian students receive the second largest proportion of baccalaureates, followed by Latino students.

Summary

The interplay between students' needs and aspirations, on the one hand, and institutional policies, programs, and practices, on the other, creates an ever-changing and dynamic situation. Layered on top of these forces are compelling and evolving State and marketplace interests because, while higher education benefits individual students, it reaps advantages for the commonwealth as well. Due to these more collective interests, the final installment in this series will present the Commission's conclusions and recommendations for achieving greater educational equity in the future -- a future that is dependent on preparing all of our students to be productive members of California's society.

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to participate productively in the world that they will enter upon graduation --
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